

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 L-01 IO-03 OMB-01 PRS-01 /050 W

----- 063066

R 252150Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 111

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 1570

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, EFIN, PGOV, PFOR, PINR, HA, LE, TW

SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN: BRUTUS' VIEWS

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 1516

1. PRESIDENTIAL ATTITUDES - IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON JUNE 23, FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY BRUTUS MADE FOLLOWING POINTS BASED ON A TALK HE HAD WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER:

A. PRESIDENT DUVALIER, BUOYED BY U.S. RESPONSE TO NORTHWEST DROUGHT RELIEF NEEDS, IS IN GOOD SPIRITS AND APPEARS CONFIDENT THAT HIS ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN, WHICH HE IS DETERMINED TO SEE THROUGH TO THE END, WILL ACHIEVE IMPORTANT RESULTS.

B. CAMPAIGN BEGAN AFTER RED CROSS PRESIDENT DR. LAROCHE HAD COMPLAINED TO DUVALIER OF THE THEFT IN CUSTOMS OF 1,500 BAGS OF FOOD (COMMENT: PROBABLY WFP). MASSIVE ARRESTS AT CUSTOMS STARTED AFTER PALACE INVESTIGATORS GAVE "WARM WELCOME" TO AN ALLEGED RINGLEADER KNOWN AS "TI-BLANC", WHO THEREUPON NAMED NAMES.

C. ACCORDING TO RECENT ESTIMATES, GOH HAS BEEN LOSING 38 PERCENT OF ITS CUSTOMS REVENUES ANNUALLY THROUGH CORRUPTION AND THEFTS. BRUTUS SAID DUVALIER CITED THE EXAMPLE OF A CONFIDENTIAL

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RELATIVELY MINOR, 27-YEAR-OLD CUSTOMS OFFICIAL WHO, ON A

\$125 PER MONTH SALARY, OWNED A \$40,000 HOUSE, TWO MACK TRUCKS, AND TWO MERCEDES CARS.

D. DUVALIER IS EXPANDING INVESTIGATIONS TO TWO OTHER KEYED GOH REVENUE PRODUCING AGENCIES, BUREAU DES CONTRIBUTIONS (TAX BUREAU) AND OFFICE DES ASSURANCE CONTRE TIERS (GOH-OWNED VEHICLE INSURANCE MONOPOLY) AND BRUTUS THOUGHT EVEN THE SACROSANCT REGIE DU TABAC WOULD EVENTUALLY CONK UNDER FIRE.

E. BRUTUS OPINED THAT IN PRESSING ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES DUVALIER NO LONGER FEELS CONSTRAINED TO PROTECT OLD DUVALIERIST LOYALISTS GUILTY OF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES. (COMMENT: THE DEGREE TO WHICH DUVALIER PENALIZES OLD GUARD WILL BE A MAJOR TEST OF CAMPAIGN'S EFFECTIVENESS.)

F. BRUTUS SAID HE TOOK OCCASION TO TELL DUVALIER THAT AMBASSADOR'S RESPONSE TO DUVALIER'S EARLIAP REQUEST FOR USG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CUSTOMS REFORM HAD BEEN THAT THOROUGH HOUSE CLEANING AT CUSTOMS WAS NEEDED FIRST, A VIEW WHICH DUVALIER NOW APPRECIATED.

2. BRUTUS ON PREDECESSOR - BRUTUS ADDED THAT HIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR, ADRIEN RAYMOND, HAD DAMAGED GOH INTERESTS WITH HIS CORRUPT PRACTICES. HE CLAIMED THAT RAYMOND HAD SOLD TWELVE BLANK HAITIAN DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS TO THE THEN GOH AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON, PIERRE JOSEPH SARKIS (FIRED IN MAY 1971), EACH OF WHICH IDENTIFIED THE BEARER AS A HAITIAN AMBASSADOR. RAYMOND ALSO SOUGHT A \$20,000 BRIBE FROM THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR AS HIS PRICE FOR SIGNING A PROPOSED GOH-GOC AGREEMENT ON TRADE AND SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL EXCHANGE. RAYMOND EXPLAINED TO THE DUMBFOUNDED CHINESE ENVOY THAT HE DESERVED A CUT BECAUSE AGREEMENT WOULD ENABLE NATIONALIST CHINESE TO INVEST IN HAITI AND THUS HAVE SAFEHAVEN WHEN THE INEVITABLE DAY OF COMMUNIST TAKEOVER ARRIVED. CHINESE AMBASSADOR LET WHOLE MATTER DROP, AND ONLY AFTER RAYMOND WAS DISPLACED BY BRUTUS DID AGREEMENT BECOME FINALIZED, ON JULY 30, 1974.

3. COMMENT - DUVALIER'S CAMPAIGN HAS SHOCKED MANY GOH OFFICIALS AND CONFUSED SOME BUSINESSMEN SINCE BOTH GROUPS HAVE LONG CONFIDENTIAL

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OPERATED IN SANURE BELIEF THEY WOULD NOT BE PUNISHED FOR FOLLOWING WHAT MANY INSIST ARE WELL ESTABLISHED, ALBEIT IMPROPER, RULES OF DOING BUSINESS IN HAITI. CERTAINLY SOME PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN WHO THOUGHT THEMSELVES SAFE HAVE BEEN RUDELY, BUT NOT VIOLENTLY, INTERROGATED, AND THE RECENT DETENTION OF MEMBERS OF FORMER PRESIDENT ESTIME'S FAMILY IS FRIGHTENING A NUMBER OF HERETOFORE POLITICALLY "SAFE" DUVALIERISTS. SICLAIT, WHILE NOT BOTHERED BY THE CUSTOMS INVESTIGATION PER SE, IS DEFINITELY

RUNNING SCARED, AND HAS WARNED DUVALIER THAT THE MILITARY OFFICERS CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION (INCLUDING COL. THOMAS, LTC COICOU, LTC VALME, MAJ. ST.-LOUIS, AND CAPT. ORCEL) ULTIMATELY WILL ORGANIZE A MILITARY TAKEOVER. ALTHOUGH LOYALTY OF THE QE CAREFULLY CHOSEN OFFICERS SEEMS UNIMPAIRED, WE DO HAVE SOME EVIDENCE THAT SECRET POLICE CHIEF LUC DESIR AND PALACE INTENDANT HENRI JEAN-BAPTISTE ARE ALSO WORRIED THAT THE CAMPAIGN IS BECOMING POLITICALLY DESTABILIZING. IN ANY CASE IT IS APPARENT THAT BUSINESS COMMUNITY, ALREADY DEMORALIZED BY WORSENING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, BADLY NEEDS BETTER COMMUNICATIONS WITH DUVALIER TO CLEAR AWAY MISCONCEPTIONS AND UNNECESSARY FEARS. WE ALSO FEEL THAT DUVALIER WOULD HAVE BEEN WISER TO CALL IN ACCOUNTANTS AND OTHER QUALIFIED FISCAL EXPERTS RATHER THAN ENTRUST INVESTIGATION SOLELY TO SECURITY OFFICIALS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CORRUPTION, PERSONAL OPINION, THEFTS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PORTA01570
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750223-0200
From: PORT AU PRINCE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750617/aaaaaphk.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 PORT AU PRINCE 1516
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <08 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN: BRUTUS' VIEWS
TAGS: EAID, EFIN, PGOV, PFOR, PINR, HA, LE, TW, (BRUTUS, EDNER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006